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ABSTRACT

While the call to restructure schools represents the latest quest for reform and improvement in American public education, efforts to improve have always been ongoing in many schools and districts. The eight elementary schools described in this book have been engaged in the processes of improvement for many years. A major theme that emerges from the study of the eight schools is the complex and long-term nature of the change process and the need to address all aspects of the school's organizational life if students' learning is to be improved. The first of nine chapters, Chapter 1, "A Context and Framework for Understanding Change," covers the background of the study, theoretical framework, recurring organizational themes, school change, research and design procedures, and data sources and methodologies. Chapter 2, "School Profiles," discusses the context of the study, demographic profiles, achievement profiles, assessing Whitney Elementary's effectiveness, and cross-case comparison of effective-schools survey results. Chapters 3 to 6 give case examples of Whitney, Sierra, Tahoe, and Yosemite Elementary Schools. Each of these chapters describes the setting, school climate and change, school technology (curriculum and instruction), school organizational structures and procedures, and instructional leadership. Chapter 7, "Increasing School Effectiveness: Lessons from the Eight Case Studies," covers school climate and change, school technology (curriculum and instruction), school organizational structures and procedures, and instructional leadership. Chapter 8, "Teacher Views on School Improvement," includes descriptions of shared decision-making and collaboration, linking school culture and school technology, and leadership by principal and teachers. The final chapter, "Purposeful Restructuring: Lessons from Effective Schools Research and Practice," deals with improved student outcomes, school organizational structures and procedures, curriculum and instruction practices, and school climate and culture. Summary and conclusions are given for each chapter. The first of two appendices gives the San Diego County Office of Education Effective Schools Survey, and the other gives the interview questions for Effective Schools Study. (Contains 306 references.) (RR)